



COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION & LABOR
REPUBLICANS

COMMITTEE STATEMENT

**Opening Statement of Rep. Mariannette Miller-Meeks (R-IA), Republican Leader
Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Investment
“The History and Continued Contributions of Tribal Colleges and Universities”
July 19, 2022**

(As prepared for delivery)

“Republicans value the role of all minority-serving institutions, including tribal colleges and universities (TCUs). But my colleagues and I have participated in the two previous hearings on minority-serving institutions and today is the third, yet the Democrats have held no hearings dedicated to fixing the spiraling student loan catastrophe. Respectfully, I must ask, what are Democrats afraid of?

“Are they afraid Republicans will call them out for doubling down on a failing system?

“Are they afraid that Republicans will point out that their student loan forgiveness scheme will do nothing to address the skyrocketing cost of college?

“Or, are they afraid Republicans will point out that Congressional Democrats have turned a blind eye to executive overreach?

“Whatever the reason, it’s time for Democrats to do what’s right for the American people.

“All students, including those at TCUs, are impacted by our broken postsecondary education system, which creates an incentive for higher tuition costs, poor student outcomes, and unaffordable debt for many Americans.

“Over the last 50 years, we have seen college costs rise at almost five times the rate of inflation, causing students and their parents to borrow more. Something has gone wrong.

“Instead of fixing the root cause of our student debt problems, such as ballooning college costs and lack of accountability for poor performing programs, Democrats are content doing what they always do: throwing more money at the problem and expecting a different outcome. Instead of looking at the data to determine who is borrowing more and why, and reforming the system, Democrats are pursuing misguided mass student loan forgiveness.

“This is a major mistake.

“Let’s be clear about one thing—there is no such thing as student loan forgiveness. These loans don’t go away: Democrats are simply undertaking a massive transfer of wealth from hardworking taxpayers to the most affluent in our society. These policies are reverse Robin Hoods—taking from the poor to pay the rich.

“Yet, that is exactly what Democrats want to do. Blanket student loan forgiveness is irresponsible. It is unfair to force those who never went to college to foot the bill for those who did. Why should a factory worker or a farmer in Iowa pay for a lawyer’s graduate degree?

“And what about those who worked hard for years to pay off their loans, or never took out loans? Or the student that purposefully chose a less expensive college to save money. Is it fair to ask these individuals to pay for someone else’s degree? No.

“Further, if Democrats believe student loan debt is a problem why aren’t they willing to hold a hearing on the topic? By not holding a hearing or asking the tough questions about fixing our loan system, Democrats are showing that they are comfortable ceding their congressional authority to the Biden administration, who in the last year and a half has already extended the repayment pause four times without legitimate reason and is changing the rules for multiple programs, changes that would not pass Congress.

“It is time for Congressional Democrats to take their legislative duty seriously and work across the aisle to reform our federal student loan system. The status quo is not an option.”

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